

duced 'phenomena' to suit the group of investigators with whom she had to deal it seems likely that she invented or embroidered many of the experiences on which Dr Fodor based his psycho-analytic evaluation of the case, especially the alleged incident, described in Chapter XXII, 'The Original Trauma'. There seems to have been no opportunity to corroborate any of her statements.

Dr Fodor, in conclusion, refers rather disparagingly to 'the old school of psychical research' (p. 221), and says, 'Psychologists will no more reject a medium for conscious or unconscious imposture than they would reject an analytic patient for lying.' Psychologists are, of course, justified in treating lies and impostures as motivated behaviour calling for exploration, but they cannot treat the lies as if they were statements of fact, or the impostures as if they threw any light on the problem of poltergeist phenomena.

Where a child or young person is the subject, lying and trickery may well be symptoms of frustration or repression, but in this case the subject was thirty-five years old, and seems to have known quite well all the time what she was doing. Dr Fodor says (p. 54), 'Social advancement and an escape from the drabness of a suburban housewife's life by producing phenomena are powerful motives.' It seems hardly necessary to look beyond them.

This book furnishes a cautionary tale for students of psychical research who, when opportunity offers, go to investigate houses reputed to be haunted. At the outset one can seldom foresee what will be found at the end of the trail.

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MATERIALISATION. DIE PHANTOME VON KOPENHAGEN. EIN BILDERBUCH. By Dr Hans Gerloff. Büdingen, H. Schwab, 1958. 100 pp.

DIE PHANTOME VON KOPENHAGEN. DAS MEDIUM EINER NIELSEN. By Dr Hans Gerloff. München; Dr. Gerlach'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1955. 240 pp.

[A second edition with supplement was published in 1955-6.]

These two books are mainly interesting in that they revive further consideration of the problems which relate to the physical mediumship of Mr Einer Nielsen, the famous Copenhagen medium. Many people have thought that the Norwegian investigation of 1922¹ which happened to be adverse to the medium was conclusive and no further serious attention need to be paid to the case. The present reviewer never shared this opinion; and Dr Gerloff's

¹ See my note in the *Journal S.P.R.*, 20 June, 1922, 327-8.

two books, coupled with a mass of unpublished material on the case in his files, has not materially changed his point of view.

It must not be imagined, however, that these latest summaries and accounts of sittings after 1922 have added in any way to the scientific study of Mr Nielsen's mediumship. It must be said quite clearly that the reason that there are still the gravest doubts as to the true nature of the phenomena is simply due to the fact that the medium has never permitted, following the 1922 results, adequate scientific investigation of any kind and recent information strongly suggests that he never will.

Einer Nielsen seems to be the last of the great European physical mediums. He is as versatile as was Margery; and many of his phenomena are even more striking than those recorded with her. His speciality is materialization and the phenomena range from masses of unformed 'ectoplasm' of the Duncan and Eva C. variety to full forms, which walk about, talk and behave just as human beings usually do. They have been photographed, hair has been cut off and sometimes they actually accompany sitters into the cabinet in order to show the medium sitting in his chair in a deep trance.

Dr Gerloff is firmly convinced that these figures are neither confederates nor dummies but genuine materializations. As in nearly all cases of this kind, the photographs do not in any way help to allay suspicion. In a few of them, however, it seems quite clear (and this is borne out by other evidence) that some of these figures are not simply dummy forms enveloped in 'ectoplasm' but, *if* they are not confederates must be considered in quite a different light. To determine their true nature might have been thought to be a paramount necessity, but up till now it would seem that no really serious attempt has been made to do so. The conditions under which the séances are operated appear to make this impossible. Mr Nielsen seems content to demonstrate his mediumship under rules and regulations which prevent a real understanding of its nature and scope. Such an attitude may be acceptable both to himself and to his supporters but it can hardly fail to make him and his work highly dubious to the scientific investigator of the paranormal. It seems likely that, as in the case of so many other mediums, Mr Nielsen will leave us without having added anything whatever to our meagre knowledge of physical mediumship and will supply additional confirmation of the opinion still widely held that genuine physical phenomena do not occur at all. It is a sorry state of affairs but what is there that anyone can do about it?

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